**HEREFORD CITY COUNCIL**

**SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA ITEM**

**COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES AROUND THE GREAT WESTERN WAY**

**1. Reason for Urgency**

1.1 The proposals reported below have only just reached a stage where they can be brought to Council’s attention, some facts are yet to be clarified. At the time the main agenda was prepared they were not known.

1.2 The event is planned for 13th September which is before the next scheduled meetings of either Finance or Community Development Committees so if Council wishes to mandate officers to support this initiative in any way it must be resolved at this meeting of Council.

**2. Background**

2.1 Following a murder in the vicinity of the Great Western Way and a subsequent assault involving a knife there has been concern in the local area about the safety of the path, which is an important pedestrian route into the City from the south side of the river. Attempts have been made to re-build community cohesion initially through a reassurance presence of police officers and community support officers and lately by activities of ward councillors and community groups. This has culminated in a proposal to accelerate the installation of CCTV and to install additional temporary cameras to improve the feeling of security and safety for those using the pathway. It is regrettable that Herefordshire Council did not act at the start of the Financial Year on the main installation proposed, which the City Council has agreed to contribute towards by funding annual running costs.

2.2 There is a proposal for a day of community activity, Sunday 13th September which will include a major effort to clean up the pathway and cut back overgrown vegetation. It is the obscuring of sight lines and the creation of potential hiding places for assailants in the undergrowth that causes much of the apprehension in people who might otherwise use the path. As Autumn evenings shorten and darkness falls earlier this fear will inevitably increase. Much of the work can be done by local people and groups using standard gardening implements, but some patches would benefit from the use of a flail cutter operated by a contractor, probably BBLP.

2.3 The use of a flail cutter would enable areas of dense undergrowth to be cleared quickly, allowing for a comprehensive and safe litter picking operation to be undertaken by the local groups. Without such a cut back much of the litter would be difficult to access and hard to see creating hazards when dealing with glass etc and the whole operation would be incomplete, reducing the benefits in reducing the fear of crime.

2.4 At the time of writing it is not known whether BBLP will supply the equipment and operator(s) free under their community support scheme or they will charge. It is also not known whether Herefordshire Council will make a contribution to the cost of using their contractors.

2.5 If the flail cutter is to be ordered and the contractor is to have staff ready to use it, the organisers of the event must know that the cost will be met. The purpose of this report is to give Council the opportunity, if it so wishes, to meet that need.

2.6 It is possible that further oral reports may be available at the meeting, in which case the Clerk will provide them. It is vital that members feeding into that process with information do so purely on factual information as Council must not be mis-advised. Aspirations, hopes or expectations of support should be noted as such and not counted upon unless firm agreements have been made with responsible authorities.

2.7 At this time the Council should asses the project on the basis that no other funding will be offered to hire the flail cuter and consider if it is prepared to meet that cost. If further sources of funding or contributions in kind are confirmed then the Council may see a reduced, or no, call on its support.

**3. Recommendations**

**3.1 That Council resolves whether to accept this as an urgent matter and to alter the order of business listed in the main agenda to include a debate on this matter.**

**3.2 That Council receives any further oral reports on the situation and then determines whether it wishes to offer financial support to enable the hire of a flail cutter or other suitable machinery to be operated by trained staff in support of a community venture on the Great Western Way.**

**3.3 That Council resolves that any support be limited to £2,000 and be drawn from the Street Scene budget.**

Steve Kerry

Town Clerk